

The Pennsylvania Observer

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December 2011 - Pennsylvania Weather Recap

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After a period of much above normal temperatures over the state of Pennsylvania at the end of November, the month of December had roller coaster-like temperature swings and a few moderate precipitation events. December did not, however, have any outbreaks of arctic air.

The first few days of December had seasonable temperatures and some scattered lake effect snow showers in the higher elevations of the Laurel Highlands and close to the Lake Erie shoreline. On the 4th, much milder air moved into the region ahead of a slow-moving cold front with temperatures rising to more than 10 degrees above normal in most locations across the state by the 6th.

Along the front, a low moved up the eastern seaboard on the 7th and 8th, bringing moderate-heavy rainfall to the southeastern part of the state and a light-moderate snowfall (3-6") to the Laurel Highlands and areas north of I-80. After the low exited the area, temperatures dropped to near, or slightly below seasonal levels with some lake effect snow showers in the north and west through the 10th-11th.

The seasonable weather did not stay in place for long, however, as warmer air again enveloped the state by mid-month. On the 17th, a cold front moved through the state dropping temperatures briefly down to near, or slightly below seasonal levels. Temperatures quickly rebounded on the 20th and 21st to much above normal as a warm front moved north through the area in association with a low that tracked from the southern Great Plains northeastward through the upper Great Lakes. This low brought a moderate rainfall to the area on the 22nd and 23rd, with most areas seeing 2-day rainfall totals of over an inch. Cold air behind the low swept through the region bringing temperatures again near normal on the 24th.

Temperatures moderated as high pressure built in from the 25th-27th, but a disturbance moving up the east coast brought another period of rain on the 27th followed by some snow showers in the cold air behind the low. After the low moved northeast away from the region, temperatures again rebounded to above normal levels resulting in a warm end to 2011.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during December 2011 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks of which our office receives routine observations. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

Parameter	Location	Value	Date (8 AM EDT)	County
Highest Temperature	Uniontown 1 Mi. NE	67°F	December 6 th	Fayette
Lowest Temperature	Pleasant Mount 1 Mi. W	5°F	December 18 th	Wayne
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Erie 5.7 Mi. SSE	5.57"	December 1 st - December 31 st	Erie
Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Rainsburg 9.0 Mi. S	2.28"	December 1 st - December 31 st	Bradford
Greatest Snowfall Depth	Erie 5.7 Mi. SSE	12.3"	December 1 st - December 31 st	Erie

Links to Pennsylvania Weather Stories during December, 2011

Feds provide \$420 million for PA flood victims:

http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2011/12/feds_approve_420_million_for_p.html

State Parks Marking New Year with 'First Day Hikes':

<http://gantdaily.com/2011/12/29/state-parks-marking-new-year-with-first-day-hikes-across-pennsylvania/>

PA Ski resorts struggle from lack of snow:

http://articles.mcall.com/2011-12-28/travel/mc-allentown-no-skiing-20111228_1_artificial-snow-making-ski-resorts-local-resorts

Flooding destroys \$30K of items at Pa. food bank:

<http://www.abc27.com/story/16112179/flooding-destroys-30k-of-items-at-pa-food-bank>